



Canadian Institute of Access and Privacy Professionals (CIAPP)

CERTIFICATION FAQ

How did the CIAPP certification come to be? Why did CIAPP certification take so long to get here?

The CIAPP certification began with the joint project of CAPA and CAPAPA in 2006 which was funded by the Privacy Commissioner of Canada and the Information Commissioner, with the assistance and support of the the Information and Privacy Commissioner Alberta, Frank Work, and University of Alberta, Information Access and Protection of Privacy certificate program. Wayne MacDonald of the IAPP program and Carla Heggie formerly with CAPAPA along with Laurence Kearley of CAPA worked with a blue-ribbon committee of federal and provincial access and privacy commissioners, chaired by Commissioner Work, on a three-part project, (standards/competencies, certification model and governance) the end result of which is this CIAPP certification. The project, and it's outcome, had the support of access and privacy commissioners across the country, as well as others professionals in the field. For more details of the project see www.capa.ca.

It takes a long time to build a credible certification initiative that is based on feedback from across Canada. Some organizations are quick to cobble together a quick and easy certification program and, boom they make a big splash and try to push it onto everyone. That is fine for those who need something simple or who don't mind a certification that is not recognized by Canada's information and privacy oversight bodies. CIAPP supports a graduated and more in depth approach and has taken careful time and consultation with its membership base and the oversight bodies.

What level of effort or commitment is involved in becoming certified?

That all depends on what level of certification you seek and your interest level in supporting the profession and CIAPP.

What are the costs associated with becoming CIAPP certified?

During this initial launch period, there is no cost to becoming CIAPP certified. Since the Canadian Institute of Access and Privacy Professionals is not in business to make money, the initial application and certification process is free for those who apply during this initial launch. The Canadian Institute of Access and Privacy Professionals is an independent incorporated organization, only loosely associated with CAPA, there is no requirement for you to be a member of CAPA or to attend CAPA's

Annual Conference or any other CAPA event. No one but you will profit from or gain advantage from becoming CIAPP-certified. In the future, the costs will be based on a simple cost recovery model. CIAPP will not charge excessive fees and will only seeks to cover operational overhead where some associations charge higher fees just to fill their bank accounts telling you things such as “*a good certification costs money*” or “*we need that money to help support you and the profession*”, or “*we have operating costs*”. What they often forget to mention is that their operating costs are so high because they are a poorly managed group or they simply want your money for their other activities.

CAPA hosts an annual conference every year in November (and has done so for almost 25 years) in Ottawa. All members, and even non-members, are invited to come. This conference has consistently attracted over 200 professionals, sometimes more, every year. The conference fee is a modest \$250 and is often attended by a number of Information and Privacy Commissioners. CAPA is not an organization intent on making money whereas other conferences cost thousands of dollars and often are only attended by 15 or 20 people. We operate on a low cost model and our members support that approach as our costs and fees are always reasonable.

Since CIAPP is not interested in making a profit on certification nor in membership in CIAPP. During the initial launch of the CIAPP certification, there is no fee whatsoever to become certified or to be a member of CIAPP. After the initial launch, there will be a nominal fee to apply for certification for future applicants. Any annual fees will be minimal and on a cost-recovery basis.

Do I have to be certified in order to keep my job in the future and what benefit will certification be to me?

No, you don't have to be certified to keep you job. We are not about scaring individuals into becoming certified for any reason other than their own desire to be recognized and support our great profession. We don't suggest you need to be certified to “remain current”, “prove yourself”, or to “advance your career”. We think that creates false hope and that such tactics speak to the underlying motives of other organizations.

Certification is an added bonus for you and, one of the main but not only advantages, is that it allows you to better promote yourself when looking for other positions in the field. Also, by having a certification which is granted by a respectable institute you automatically gain the credibility of the organization along with its certification program. If you put a few letters behind your name from a lesser organization, you could tarnish yourself based on what that organization has done in the past and what kind of reputation it has.

Will certification and professional standards evolve into better classifications, pay levels and professional recognition?

That's hard to tell, but we certainly hope it will increase the level of professional standardization out there and will, eventually, add to the credibility of the profession as time moves forward.

How is CIAPP certification different from other certification models out there?

CIAPP certification differs from other certification attempts in three main ways:

1. CIAPP does not charge its members to write tests.
2. You do not need to be a member of any association to be certified and CIAPP recognizes many other credible certification programs and associations.
3. CIAPP, and CAPA, have been working on this initiative for many years and it is more about standardizing our profession than making money for any particular group or cause and we feel a good certification model does not base itself on making money in exchange for a certification other than covering simple administrative costs.

What are the levels of CIAPP certification and what does it take to qualify for each level?

There are three levels:

1. CIAPP Certified
2. CIAPP Professional
3. CIAPP Master

For more detailed information on what is required for each level, please see our website and the enclosed application forms.

Can I move up the certification ladder to the top level and what will it take?

Of course! Just like other respected professions like accounting, the trades, and the legal profession, anyone can advance to the highest level but it takes training and commitment to the profession. Just like these other professions, obtaining the highest certification may not be for everyone as the highest certification needs to be respected by those outside the profession.

That requires that only the most advanced, and trained, professionals receive the top certification. You wouldn't want someone calling themselves an Chartered Accountant if they never graduated from university and conversely, we don't want to grant the top certification to anyone who isn't a bona fide, experienced, IAPP professional who is committed to a certain ethical and professional standard.

What? No tests?

That's right, there are no tests for this certification initiative. Some organizations make their money by charging you to write tests, we do not. We believe that the IAPP certificate from the UofA, or your proven history of working directly in this field, evidences your knowledge and skill level accordingly and we do not need to make you study for more tests just to prove that or line our pockets by getting you to spend your precious personal hours studying for and writing tests.

What is the Code of Conduct and Ethics referred to in the materials?

Like other respectable professions, members need to adhere to a certain standard of ethical behavior and conduct. Nothing in our Code of Conduct will jeopardize or conflict with your employment duties

but we do require members to adhere to them to indicate to the world just what it means to be a CIAPP certified professional and what kind of values you bring to the table. Once a membership in CIAPP is established, a draft Code of Conduct will be circulated and discussed with those who have been certified.

Where do I get an application form and where do I send it?

It's on our website and it's included here. You can complete it, sign it, scan it, and send it back to us for processing. Our mailing address is: 207 Bank Street, Suite 237, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 2N2. Our fax number is 613-833-0905.

How long should the certification process take?

CIAPP and CAPA are volunteer based organizations run by your fellow access and privacy professionals. We are aiming to respond to each application within three months, perhaps sooner, but it may take longer depending on workloads and the number of applications coming in, particularly early on as we anticipate certifying over 500 members in the first year based on our current membership numbers and the feedback we have received from the IAPP community as we have rolled this out.

What recourse do I have if I am told I don't meet the qualifications for the particular certification designation for which I applied?

CIAPP and CAPA, as you would expect from any legitimate organization, has a transparent appeals recourse, and special exceptions, mechanism built into its certification process. If you are told you don't meet the qualifications for a certain level you will be advised what level you do qualify for, what you need to do to obtain the requested level, and advised of your right to request a "second look" at your application and credentials by someone other than the one who reviewed your application initially.

We believe this ensures the process is fair.